

pre-contacting a hydrocracking catalyst with a solution containing an organic nitrogen compound in a range of 10 ppm to 100 ppm by nitrogen weight; and

contacting a feed oil substantially comprised of hydrocarbon oils and hydrogen with the hydrocracking catalyst that has been contacted with the organic nitrogen compound in order to obtain a hydrocarbon oil with a lower boiling point than that of the feed oil wherein the concentration of nitrogen in the feed oil is not more than 10 ppm;

the organic nitrogen compound being an organic nitrogen compound having a boiling point that is lower than a 50% distillation temperature of the feed oil and that is higher than 200°C, and wherein, as a result of contacting the organic nitrogen compound with hydrocracking catalyst, the hydrocracking catalyst contains 0.01% to 1% by nitrogen weight of the organic nitrogen compound per catalyst weight.

2. (Amended) A method of hydrocracking hydrocarbon oils derived from petroleum comprising the steps of:

contacting a petroleum fraction containing an organic nitrogen compound in a range of 10 ppm to 100 ppm by nitrogen weight and having a 50% distillation temperature that is lower

than the 50% distillation temperature of a feed oil substantially comprised of hydrocarbon oils and that is higher than 200°C with a hydrocracking catalyst wherein the concentration of nitrogen in the feed oil is not more than 10 ppm; and

contacting the feed oil and hydrogen with the hydrocracking catalyst that has been contacted with the petroleum fraction in order to obtain a hydrocarbon oil with a boiling point lower than that of the feed oil, and wherein, as a result of contacting the petroleum fraction with hydrocracking catalyst, the hydrocracking catalyst contains 0.01% to 1% by nitrogen weight of the organic nitrogen compound per catalyst weight.

11. (Amended) The hydrocracking method according to claim 2 wherein the petroleum fraction is gas oil.

Please add the following new claims.

--15. (New) The method of hydrocracking hydrocarbon oils according to claim 1 wherein the nitrogen compound is pre-contacted with the catalyst for a time period sufficient for the nitrogen compound to adsorb to the catalyst.

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--16. (New) The method of hydrocracking hydrocarbon oils according to claim 2 wherein the nitrogen compound is pre-contacted with the catalyst for a time period sufficient for the nitrogen compound to adsorb to the catalyst.--

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.